



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SECRETARY

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### **DEQ presents awards to New Orleans city and parish employees for surveillance operation**

**BATON ROUGE** – Today, Peggy Hatch, Secretary for the Department of Environmental Quality, handed out certificates to more than 35 employees from the city of New Orleans, New Orleans Police Department and Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office that assisted DEQ in a surveillance operation in December.

Several agencies worked together to document areas of concern that involved solid waste, hazardous waste, water quality and asbestos issues in a part of New Orleans East that has long been a notorious illegal dumping area.

The operation led to the arrests of Cecil and Floyd Persons for illegal disposal of solid waste. Both men have been charged by the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office and are set for arraignment on January 25, 2011 before Judge Julian Parker. More than 90 sites were inspected. Several sites may be referred to DEQ's Enforcement Division for civil penalties or to DEQ's Criminal Division for criminal penalties. Inspectors also noted several areas that had been cleaned up either before, during or after the operation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division and Louisiana State Police worked alongside DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division to conduct surveillance of this area. As in previous operations, DEQ brought in staff from across the state to conduct multi-media inspections at these facilities. The city of New Orleans provided police, sanitation, health and code inspectors, and other essential personnel during the event. Deputies from Sheriff Marlin Gusman's office accompanied DEQ's inspectors. DEQ also partnered with the New Orleans Fire Department, New Orleans Revenue Department and the New Orleans and Mosquito and Termite Control Board.

"It makes sense for local and state agencies to work together in times like these," DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch said. "The locals and the state have the same goals. We want to see this area cleaned up and we want to institute a new mindset where people will not want to illegally dump materials, some of which can be detrimental to the environment. We certainly appreciate all the help from the other agencies which helped make this operation a success."

"The collaboration between the city and DEQ proves that focused, coordinated efforts can go a long way in keeping our city clean and safe," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "We are fully committed to ridding our city of blighted property and curtailing illegal dumping is a critical component of our strategy."

Those receiving certificates included: City of New Orleans Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu; Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Ann Duplessis; Cynthia S. Lear and Edgar Roberts from the Department of Sanitation; Dr. Michael Carroll from the Mosquito and Termite Control Board; Winston Reid and Wes Taylor from Code Enforcement; Norman Foster and Romy Samuels from the Department of Finance; New Orleans Police Department Superintendent Ronal Serpas; Deputy Superintendent Marlon A. Defillo; Capt. William Ceravolo; Sgt. Lawrence Dupree; Sgt. Roderick Franklin; Sgt. Michael Boudy; Officer Edie Dema; New Orleans Fire Department Chief Charles Parent; Allen Square and Denice Ross from MIS; and City Attorney Nannette Jolivet-Brown.

Deputies that volunteered included: Sheriff Marlin Gusman; Lt. Cathy Taylor; Jimmy Sullivan; Alvin Brooks; Martin Robinson; Doris Taylor; Kevin Newton; Denise Alexander; Yolonde Johnson; Billy James; Darren Stacker; Charles Goldston; James Gathright; Nicholas Richards; Henry Crouch; Brian Dupre; Wilbert Craige; Wallace Simpson; Lawrence Francioni; and Nathaniel Reed.